

# Scoring Guide: 5 (Actual combined score: 10)

Magic Johnson would be my choice for the "Man of the Year." He has had unbelievable influence on the world during the past year. Even since he announced to the world that he is HIV positive, a significant change has taken place in the area of AIDS awareness. AIDS is no longer viewed as merely a problem for the homosexual community. People began to realize that even strong, healthy heterosexuals like Magic Johnson can get AIDS. When he first announced his shocking news, people all over the world were stunned and devastated. It was as if a dark cloud had all of a sudden descended upon the world. People were sad that such a famous and talented basketball player had to get such a terrible disease. At the same time, however, people also realized that if Magic had only been more careful, he might not have gotten AIDS.

What happened to Magic made him even more famous all over the world, but that's not what makes him "Man of the Year." How Magic chose to deal with what happened to him is what makes him worthy of the title "Man of the Year." Magic didn't just give up and wait for his death to come. Instead, he tried to selflessly make a difference in the world. He came out into the lime light campaigning for AIDS awareness. He made commercials and went on TV talk shows. His basic message was that if you're going to have sex, have protected sex. Use a condom. With the help of modern technology (i.e. cable TV and satellites), his message went all over the world. Magic selflessly chose to use his celebrity status to send out a message to the world. This message has been long overdue. Scientists have been trying to send out the same message for quite a while now, but none were as successful or effective as Magic. What makes Magic so selfless is that he didn't have to do any of the AIDS awareness activities that he did. However, he did make the decision to be selfless and the world should be grateful.

In addition to his selflessness, Magic's demonstration of courage also makes him worthy of the title "Man of the Year." He did not sit around and wait for people to feel sorry for him. In fact, even though he stopped playing for the Los Angeles Lakers, he continued to work out and stay in shape. He wasn't about to let his illness cheat him out of his life. When time for the 1992 Olympics rolled around, he was invited to be part of the Dream Team. As soon as his doctors said he was fit to play, he unhesitatingly joined the Dream Team. He trained and played as hard as any other member of the team. As a result of their collective effort, the members of the Dream Team were able to bring home the gold medal for the United States.

Recently, Magic has been in the news again. Apparently, he is trying to decide whether to start playing basketball for the Lakers again. Yesterday, he threw a birthday party for himself at MagicMountain. As always, he appeared to be the perfect picture of health.

Magic's courage in dealing with his illness, his selflessness in making the world aware that AIDS is everyone's problem, and his dedication to the sport of basketball is what makes Magic Johnson my choice for "Man of the Year." Magic continues to be an inspiration for AIDS patients and a reminder to healthy people that everyone is vulnerable when it comes to AIDS. Because of Magic, people all over the world are more aware of AIDS and put more significance on protected sex. Hopefully, Magic will continue to heighten the awareness of the world, and hopefully, the world will continue to exist among us for a long, long time to come.